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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/15/2018
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SUBJECT: GOE HAS NO OBJECTION TO FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR
LEBANON MEETING IN KUWAIT

REF: LOGERFO-GRANT-SISSON E-MAILS APRIL 13-14

Classified By: ECPO Minister-Counselor William R. Stewart for reason 1.
4 (b).

¶1. (C) MFA Lebanon Director Nazih El-Negary told us April 15 that FM Aboul Gheit has no objection to a French proposal to organize an April 22 meeting on Lebanon on the margins of the Iraq neighbors conference in Kuwait. The French are planning to invite the U.S., Egypt, the Arab League, Saudi Arabia, EU Special Representative Solana, the UN and Russia to participate (ref e-mail). El-Negary said that the GOE is waiting for a formal French demarche and non-paper on this proposed meeting, which the French have not yet delivered.

¶2. (C) El-Negary said that Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora recently told Egyptian Ambassador in Beirut El-Bedawi that the Lebanese Government would want to be aware of the meeting's substance, but would not want to attend. PM Siniora said his government would not want to participate in order to avoid accusations from the Lebanese opposition that the GOL is trying to "internationalize" the political crisis. According to El-Negary, Siniora said that his government would only want to "internationalize" the crisis if the Arab League Initiative is clearly "dead." Until that time, Siniora believes it will be better for his government in terms of internal Lebanese politics to work only in the Arab League context.

¶3. (C) El-Negary said that Egypt's objectives for a meeting in Kuwait would be to support the Siniora government and the Arab League Initiative, although he noted that he had not discussed any specifics with FM Aboul Gheit. He said that FM Aboul Gheit has expressed interest in discussing Lebanon with the Secretary in Washington during his April 17 visit. El-Negary said FM Aboul Gheit will probably ask for the U.S. to continue to keep its distance from the Arab League Initiative, and also to continue a low-profile posture on Lebanon.

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